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M.1 BASIS FOR AWARD

The Census Bureau's source evaluation will be based on best-value principles. Accordingly, award will be made to the responsible and technically acceptable Offeror whose proposal provides the greatest overall value to the Government, price and other factors considered. This best-value determination will be accomplished by comparing the value of the differences in the technical factors for competing offers, based on their strengths, weaknesses, and risks, with differences in their price to the Government. In making this comparison, the Government is more concerned with obtaining superior technical, and management capabilities than with making an award at the lowest overall cost to the Government. However, the Government will not make an award at a significantly higher overall price to achieve slightly superior technical approach. The Offeror is advised that evaluation factors other than cost or price are significantly more important than cost or price. Only Offerors that demonstrate acceptable submission to the Government of all items in Section L of this solicitation (or amendments thereof) will be considered for award.

M.2 EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD

- a) Evaluation of all offers will be made in accordance with the criteria outlined in this section. The proposals will be evaluated against the following six (6) factors:

Factor 1 - Technical Approach

Factor 2 - Similar Experience and Past Performance

Factor 3 - Program Management

Factor 4 - Key Personnel

Factor 5 - Option for Ad Hoc Tabulation Replacement

Factor 6 – Cost

Factors 1 through 5 are referred to as the Technical Factors. Factor 6 is a Cost Factor that will be evaluated separately and applied in the determination of best value.

The rated technical evaluation criteria are more important than price. As relative technical advantages and disadvantages become less distinct, a difference in price between proposals is of increased importance in determining the most advantageous proposal. Conversely, as differences in price become less distinct, differences in relative technical advantages and disadvantages among proposals are of increased importance to the determination.

- b) The technical evaluation will be achieved through a determination and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, and risks of each proposal. Technical risks will be included in the final evaluation of each factor and will not be evaluated as a separate factor. In the assessment of technical risk, the Government evaluators will consider all available information.
- c) The results of the technical evaluation and the computed cost of each proposal will be provided to the Source Selection Official (SSO) to support the award decision.
- d) The evaluation of each proposal will include written proposals, initial and revisions, oral presentations and discussions.

M.3 TECHNICAL EVALUATION

M.3.1 Relative Order of Importance of Technical Factors

The Technical Factors (Factors 1-5 listed in M.2) are listed in order of importance, with Factor 1 being the most important.

M.3.2 Description of Technical Factors

Detailed descriptions of the evaluation factors are provided below.

M.3.2.1 Technical Approach

The Offeror's technical approach will be evaluated by assessing the likelihood that the Offeror's proposed technical approach will meet the Government's requirements, including any associated risk of the Offeror's non-performance in the technical approach. This factor will be used to evaluate the degree to which the Offeror's proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the DADS Program and the extent to which the proposed technical approach meets all requirements and challenges.

The Government will evaluate the Offeror on their entire proposed technical approach for the DADS Program. The Offeror's proposal will be evaluated on evidence of specific methods, techniques, and approaches that demonstrate the ability to meet real-time and dynamic requirements and workloads of DADS tabulation and dissemination responsibilities.

The Government's evaluation of the Offeror's proposal will consider the degree to which the technical approach addresses the following: Business Operations – Tabulation; Business Operations - Dissemination; DADS Requirements Management; System Life Cycle Management; System Engineering and Architecture; Security and Replacement of DADS Systems.

The Government views a replacement systems architecture that does not follow the Census Bureau Enterprise Architecture (Go-To) as offering a greater risk to the Government. A proposed architecture that is not in compliance with the Census Bureau Enterprise Architecture (Go-To) must clearly demonstrate the benefits in terms of risk reduction, performance improvement, or cost reduction. Other technical risks will be assessed.

M.3.2.2 Similar Experience and Past Performance

In this factor, the subfactor Similar Experience is more important than the subfactor Past Performance.

Similar Experience

- a) This subfactor will be evaluated on the basis of the Offeror's relevant experience during the last five (5) years. The Government will determine whether the Offeror's experience, including the planning and implementation, on contracts is similar in size, scope, and complexity to the DADS Program. The Government may contact references cited on the Similar Experience Template (Section L Attachment L.1). Similar experience from current or previous contracts will be compared with the scope of work as outlined in Section C – Performance Work Statement.
- b) The information presented in the Offeror's proposal, together with information from any other sources available to the Government, will provide the primary input for

evaluation of this factor. The Government reserves the right to verify the specifics of current or previous contracts described by the Offeror's proposal.

- c) The Government will evaluate the Offeror's similar experience as it relates to the requirements defined in Section C – Performance Work Statement. Greater emphasis will be given to technical solutions that demonstrate successful implementation of systems similar in size, scope and complexity to the DADS Program.

Past Performance

- a) Evaluation of past performance will allow the Government to determine whether the Offeror consistently delivered quality services in a timely manner. Past performance will be evaluated for contracts performed by the Offeror during the last five (5) years consistent with the size, scope and complexity of the DADS Program. The Government may contact references cited on the Past Performance Questionnaire (Section L Attachment L.2) as well as other relevant individuals. The Government may obtain additional information on past performance from other sources such as Government past performance databases, Inspector General reports, and the Government Accountability Office reports.
- b) Past performance on contracts that are more technically relevant to DADS Program requirements and similar in size, scope and complexity will receive greater emphasis than performance on contracts that are less relevant.
- c) In general, past performance will be evaluated on the extent of client satisfaction with the previous performance of the Offeror; the Offeror's effectiveness in managing and directing resources; the Offeror's demonstration of reasonable and cooperative behavior in dealing with clients; the Offeror's quality of previously performed services; the Offeror's ability to control costs and manage contract activities; and meeting schedules in providing services and products.
- d) If the Government receives, for a given Offeror, no Past Performance Questionnaires or only irrelevant questionnaires, the Offeror will receive a neutral Past Performance evaluation.

M.3.2.3 Program Management

The Offeror's management approach will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the Offeror has developed a strategy for the effective and efficient management of contract activities to successfully fulfill the requirements of the Performance Work Statement. The Offeror's approach should address all aspects of Program Management found within the - Performance Work Statement Section C.5, with the exception of C.5.8 - Key Personnel. Key Personnel will be evaluated as a separate factor.

The Government will evaluate information contained in the resumes for the initial staff for Phase 1, Transition (see Section C.5.9, Staffing). The Government will evaluate, at a minimum, information contained in the resumes of the initial staff. Evaluation will be based on the extent to which personnel submitted by the Offeror meet, or exceed, skills, experience and education required in performing the work in the Performance Work Statement, Section C.

M.3.2.4 Key Personnel

The Government will evaluate, at a minimum, information contained in the resumes submitted with the proposal, of the proposed Key Personnel. Evaluation will be based on the extent to which personnel submitted by the Offeror meet, or exceed, skills, experience and education required in performing the work in the Performance Work Statement, Section C.

The information presented in the Offeror's proposals together with information from any other sources available to the Government, will provide the primary input for evaluation of this factor. The Government reserves the right to verify the performance on other contracts of Key Personnel identified by the Offeror in their proposal.

The Government reserves the right to utilize other information available to evaluate Key Personnel. For example, the Government may query contract references and other end user representatives regarding the experience of proposed Key Personnel and the quality of their performance.

M.3.2.5 Option for Ad Hoc Tabulation Replacement

The Offeror's technical approach for Ad Hoc Tabulation Replacement will be evaluated by assessing the likelihood that the technical approach would meet the Government's requirements, including any associated risk of the Offeror's non-performance. The Offeror's proposal will be evaluated on evidence of specific methods, techniques, and approaches that demonstrate the ability to meet the Government's requirements for Ad Hoc Tabulation Replacement and activities as stated in Section C.6.

M.4 COST EVALUATION**M.4.1 General**

The cost evaluation will include cost completeness and accuracy, price realism, price reasonableness, cost risk, and total price to the Government.

M.4.2 Cost Evaluation Factors**M.4.2.1 Cost Completeness and Accuracy**

- a) The Government will review the pricing tables for completeness and accuracy. A determination will be made as to whether the Offeror properly understands the cost proposal instructions and properly completed the pricing tables. The Offeror's proposal will be checked for mathematical correctness to include the following:
 - 1) Checking arithmetic in all B-Table computations;
 - 2) Making sure that all prices/costs are summarized correctly; and
 - 3) Comparing electronic submittals with hard copies.
- b) A determination will be made regarding whether the price appears unbalanced either for the total price of the proposal or separately priced line items. An analysis will be made by item, resource, quantity, and year to identify any irregular or unusual pricing patterns. An unbalanced proposal is one that incorporates prices that are less than cost for some items and/or prices that are overstated for other items.

M.4.2.2 Price Realism

The Offeror is placed on notice that any proposal that is unrealistic in terms of technical commitment or unrealistically low in cost and/or price will be deemed reflective of an inherent lack of technical competence or indicative of failure to comprehend the complexity and risk of contract requirements, and may be grounds for rejection of the proposal.

M.4.2.3 Price Reasonableness

The Offeror is expected to establish a reasonable price relationship between all price/cost elements listed in Section B. An evaluation of the Offeror's cost proposal will be made to determine if the cost is realistic for the work to be performed, reflects a clear understanding of the requirements, and is consistent with the technical proposal. Reasonableness determinations will be made by determining if competition exists, by comparing bid prices with established commercial or General Services Administration price schedules, by evaluating labor rates, and/or by comparing bid prices with the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE).

M.4.2.4 Cost Risk

Cost risk refers to any aspect of the Offeror's proposal that could have significant negative cost consequences for the Government. Each proposal will be assessed to identify potential cost risk. Where cost risk is assessed, it may be described in quantitative terms or used as a best value discriminator.

M.5 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Proposals **shall** be prepared in accordance with the instructions in Section L. If a proposal is not prepared in accordance with Section L, it will be determined to be non-responsive.

Assumptions, trade-offs and risks should be clear throughout the proposal, and risk mitigation strategies presented proactively.

M.6 EVALUATION PROCESS

The Government will evaluate the ability of each Offeror and its proposed approach to satisfy the Government's requirements in the Performance Work Statement, Section C. The Government intends to utilize the following high-level steps in performing its evaluation. The evaluation of each proposal will include, at a minimum, written proposals, initial and revisions, oral presentations and discussions.

1. *Evaluation of Initial Proposals.* Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated on the five technical factors described in Section M.2
2. *Initial Cost Evaluation.* Cost proposals will be evaluated as described in Section M.4, Cost Evaluation.
3. *Competitive Range Determination (FAR 15.306).*
4. *Oral Presentations.* Oral presentations will be evaluated as part of the Offeror's overall proposal in relation to the evaluation factors set out herein. Not all Offerors may be invited to deliver an Oral Presentation.
5. *Discussions.* At the Contracting Officer's discretion, the Government may conduct written and oral discussions with the Offeror at any time after the competitive range determination through the submission of final proposals.

6. *Final Proposal Revisions (Best And Final Offers)*. The Offeror will be given the opportunity to submit final proposal revisions after the conclusion of discussions.
7. *Evaluation of Final Proposal Revisions*. Final proposal revisions will be evaluated against the evaluation factors and a best value determination will be made.
8. *Source Selection and Contract Award*.

M.7 EVALUATION SUPPORT

The Offeror is advised that the Government may utilize outside Contractors and/or Consultants to assist in the evaluation of proposals. These outside Contractors will have access to any and all information contained in the Offeror's proposal, and will be subject to appropriate conflict of interest, standards of conduct, and confidentiality restrictions.

[End Section M]